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ADDRESS  
OF  
BENJAMIN PARKE,  
M. E. GRAND HIGH PRIEST,  
OF THE  
Most Excellent Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter,  
OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA,

*Delivered before the Grand Chapter, at their Annual Communication, held in the  
Masonic Temple, Philadelphia—on the Festival of St. John the Evan-  
gelist, December 27, A. D. 1860—A. . L. . 5860—A. . I. . 2390.*

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PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE GRAND CHAPTER.

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ANNUAL GRAND COMMUNICATION, MOST EXCELLENT GRAND  
HOLY ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER OF PENNSYLVANIA, HELD DEC.  
27th, 1860—A. S. I. 2390.

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On motion of Comp. Samuel C. Perkins, and duly seconded by Comp. Wm. H. Adams, the following Preamble and Resolutions were adopted, to wit:

*Whereas*, The official term of Comp. Benjamin Parke, M. E. G. H. P. of the Grand Chapter of Pennsylvania, closes this night, and it is fitting and appropriate that some expression should be given to the feelings of the Grand Chapter at his retirement from this high office,

*Resolved*, That the Grand Chapter of Pennsylvania have regarded with great and fraternal satisfaction the able, impartial and faithful manner in which Comp. Benjamin Parke has fulfilled the responsible duties of the eminent office to which he was called by the unanimous suffrages of his companions,

*Resolved*, That the Grand Chapter learned with regret the determination of Comp. Parke to decline a re-election to the oriental chair; and hereby express their heartfelt and most fraternal wishes that his future earthly life may long continue in peace, happiness and prosperity; and when he shall be called to pass through the great veil which separates time from eternity, may he be found in possession of the "true signet," which shall ensure his dwelling forever in the eternal Temple of Light, where the great I AM ever liveth and reigneth in indescribable glory.

*Resolved*, That this Grand Chapter have heard with great pleasure and profit the very interesting, highly instructive and eloquent address delivered this evening by Comp. Parke upon his retirement from the chair, and most earnestly request the same for publication.

*Resolved*, That a copy of these Resolutions, duly authenticated, be prepared under the direction of the Grand Officers, and presented to Companion Parke.

# ADDRESS.

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## COMPANIONS:

Since our last Annual Communication, another year—a wave in the tide of time—has swept its course into the ocean of eternity, bearing upon its bosom a record of our duties and responsibilities, our acts and doings as men and as Masons. That record has now become history; irrevocably sealed up, to pass the piercing scrutiny of our Supreme Grand High Priest in the Heavens.

It is not an uninteresting thought, that our Annual Communication occurs on the great festival day of Masonry, a day consecrated to the memory of St. John the Evangelist—venerated throughout the habitable globe as a patron of our Order—whose life and character formed the purest and brightest exhibition of the Masonic virtues. This thought gains in interest, when we reflect that on this day, and perhaps at this hour, our brethren dispersed around the globe, whether residing in city, town or country, clad in costly or humble garb, are gathering around the altars of Masonry, where all distinctions but goodness are laid aside, to “render thanksgiving and praise for our Institution, and the pleasures and benefits derived from it; and to ask Him, who aforetime appeared to Moses in *a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush*, to enkindle in each of our hearts a flame of devotion to Him, of love to each other, and of charity to all mankind.” It is a heart-cheering and ennobling thought that on this day especially, our Institution—the only one, it is believed, in which the science of symbolism, and symbolie teaching are preserved and practiced—exhibits before the world the most perfect symbol in existence, of the BROTHERHOOD OF MANKIND. For not only on our own continent, from the frozen ocean to

Cape Horn, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but throughout Europe and Asia, from the icy regions of Siberia to the burning plains of Hindostan—

“From Greenland’s icy mountains  
To India’s coral strand:”

Wherever the light of civilization has beamed, the tenets of Masonry are taught; its secret language learned and practiced, and the unwavering fidelity and love which characterized the holy St. John, inculcated.

Surely, then, it is meet for *us* to be thankful; and amid such soul-stirring reflections and proud gratulations, to return our hearty thanksgiving to our Father in Heaven, for the preservation of our lives and the blessings we have so bountifully enjoyed; and in the inspired language adopted in our Ritual, in imitation of our ancient brethren at the dedication of the temple, bow ourselves and worship, and praise the Lord, saying: “*For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.*”

And now, Companions, while enjoying the proud consciousness of being members, in good standing, of this ancient and wide-spread fraternity, whose mystic chain of Brotherhood engirdles our globe, we may surely be indulged in a few reflections as to its origin, character and mission.

The *origin* of the *science* now called Masonry, must be left to conjecture. No man can show when it did *not* exist, or point us to the time when it *began*. Its birth was anterior to authentic history, or profane tradition. It grew out of the physical and moral wants of man as a fallen being, taking the mould and hue of the religion practiced by the various nations of ancient times.

As we look backward, we see issuing from the mists and clouds of the remotest antiquity, the rivulet of Masonry. It trickles like a current of love along the valleys of this wilderness world, and though mostly unseen, and hidden from the gaze of the multitude, it has collected and borne along in its ever onward course, much of the wisdom, and learning, and piety of every age. Its intimate connection with the Hebrews, among whom it was probably first *organized into a society*, at

the building of the temple, has deeply imbued its ritual with bible language and sentiment, and its memorial ceremonies with bible history : while at the same time a resemblance, in some cases clear, and in others more faint, can be traced to the religious mysteries of Ancient Egypt, Assyria, Chaldea, Hindostan, and the Druids of Gaul and Britain. This is especially true in regard to the symbolic mode of teaching—of communicating thought and conveying moral instruction by means of appropriate emblems—common among the Egyptians and other nations of antiquity, now almost, if not exclusively, confined to the Masonic Fraternity. These emblems, well understood and familiar, were not arbitrarily adopted; but with extraordinary ingenuity and skill were appropriated to their respective objects with a philosophic accuracy; big with meaning and rich in their moral teaching. They are links in that great chain which, extending back through long drawn centuries, bind us to the earlier ages of our race : especially to the noble men of those times, who amid the darkness of pagan error and general depravity, retained glimmerings of divine truth.

But Masonry, though coming down to us through a religious channel, and richly freighted with scripture truth, does not pretend to be Religion itself, or in any manner a substitute for Religion. It has neither the regenerating power, the inspiration, the authority, or the consolation of true Religion. It does not pretend to change the heart, or to answer the questions; “How shall man be just with God?” “What must I do to be saved?”

Masonry *is*, however, *religious*; and has not inaptly been termed “Religion’s handmaid,” as calculated to lead thereto. Its memorial ceremonies commemorate events recorded in the bible, or such as are intimately connected therewith, and its lectures and lessons are mostly in bible language. No man can be an apt teacher of Masonry, or rightly understand its history or philosophy, unless he be well read in the historical books of the bible and deeply imbued with their spirit. The open bible is the Great Light of Masonry in all its degrees; as teaching the whole duty of man, as the guide to

all truth, the object of pursuit in every degree in Masonry, and a sure direction to the Temple of Happiness.

A firm belief in God, as the Great Architect of the Universe and Supreme Ruler of the World, with an unwavering trust in His superintending providence and care in all times of peril and danger, *are the Masonic articles of faith*; the primordial source of all its principles; the very spring and foundation of all its virtues and teachings. In view of this, it has been well said by an able Masonic writer, "that if, according to the revelation of the prophet, the Lord only requires of us to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with God; and if the Divine Founder of Christianity placed the sum and substance of *His* religion in loving God and our neighbor, how consistent with these doctrines is the declaration of the Masonic Constitution, that 'piety towards God, the glorious Master Builder of the Universe, and love to mankind, are the two great and immutable pillars which support the fabric of Masonry.'"

The MISSION of Masonry is the same now as it ever was. Revolutions in empires, change or destruction of sceptres, the rise and fall of thrones or dynasties, the union or division of churches, sects or parties, do not change the nature of man. He is the same sin-burdened, sorrow-burdened, dependent being as when the Patriarch Job "delivered the poor and fatherless that cried, and caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." "The poor shall never cease out of the land." Sickness, disaster and accident will continue to afflict the bodies, and sorrow and bereavement to pierce and rend the souls of all of Adam's race. Discordant passions will beget strife, the parent of a brood of evils which infest our sin-cursed earth. The mission of Masonry is to relieve and lessen all these evils. "To do good to all men, *especially* to those who are of the household of faith"—our brethren.

We are also to *work*; not alone at our "usual avocations," or at what is technically called the *work* of Masonry; but also to do the work of moral and responsible beings—the work of life. "To divest our minds and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life," and "to serve God and our distressed worthy brethren;" to write our names on the *hearts* of our



fellow men, in acts of kindness, love, charity and mercy, that our influence and our memories may remain and flourish when our bodies are laid in the dust. That the blessings of the good among men, and the approving smiles of Heaven, may rest upon us and our Institution.

That *much* of this mission of Masonry is accomplished—*worked out* in the world—is known and acknowledged by those who are not Masons. It is far better known to those within the Lodge, who are permitted to indulge their warm feelings of benevolence, and share in the “luxury of doing good,” whether by an appropriation from the funds of the Lodge, or, when that has been exhausted, by a direct draft from the fountain of charity—a purse filled with coin warm from the hearts and hands of those who “do their alms in secret,” knowing that “God who seeth in secret, Himself shall reward them openly.” But as mankind are all creatures of sense and observation, and more effectually operated upon by whatever strikes their senses, than by many lessons and homilies; as example also exerts a powerful influence for good, kindling a praiseworthy emulation to imitate and excel in noble and generous deeds, and as we have bible authority for “provoking unto love and good works,” I will here, at the hazard of revealing Masonic secrets, briefly refer to a few cases exemplifying Masonry *working out her mission*.

A few years since, a few Masonic brethren went to a neighboring town for the purpose of opening and constituting a new Lodge. In passing along the street to the hotel where they were to stop, their attention was called to the proclamation of an auctioneer, that *at one o'clock of that day* would be sold, at the house late of ———, deceased, the *whole of the household furniture*, for the *payment of rent*. A curiosity, well understood by such as have been masters of lodges, accustomed to listen to tales of distress and want, prompted inquiry. The information obtained was, that ——— had lately died, leaving a decrepid widow and two daughters, whose labor at dressmaking had for several years barely supported their parents, and that the sickness and burial of their father had so exhausted their means as to render it impossible to pay

their rent. They were now about to be left portionless and homeless, with the alms-house in view, as the probable home of their mother for the approaching winter. A visit was paid to the ladies, and the information obtained, that among the papers of the deceased was a certificate of membership in a Masonic Lodge in Ireland. This, although not necessary to excite the compassion of the inquirer, made it his business and duty to act, and furnished the key to obtain immediate relief.

The brethren were called together, a purse made up, and a brother commissioned to attend the sale and purchase the goods for the daughters. The public, learning that the bidding was for the daughters, forbore to raise the price, so that the purse was not exhausted; and the evening which had been looked to as one of cheerlessness, misery and want, without a bed whereon to rest, found them in possession of all their goods, with a few dollars as a capital upon which to commence a small business, and with the consciousness that in the land of their adoption they had found friends and protectors, drawn to them by the magnet of that certificate of brotherhood.

Again—Look at yonder old man as he walks along the street—a crutch on one side and a staff the other. See his bent body, his limping gait, his searred countenance, his trembling, tottering frame! If your benevolence is excited, stop him, ask him his name and history, and listen to his tale. In his prime of life he enlisted in his country's service. He fought her battles, he carried her standard, and more than once raised it, with the stars and stripes floating, upon the battlements of a conquered enemy. His blood has often freely flowed. His shattered limbs badly surgeoned, and wounds irritated by exposure, which neither time nor skill can now heal, with the effects of disease induced by climate, privation and hardship, have disabled him from exertion, left him dependent and rendered life a burden.

Who has maintained and relieved him? His country, in whose service he periled all and spent all? She gave him a pittance of land and a niggardly pension, of the most of the



value of which he was robbed by the sleek speculator and the extortionate money-lender. Who *then* succored him? His commander, who carried off the glories of battles won by the exertion and blood of the private soldiery, and was borne by the suffrages of a grateful people to the highest post of civil honor in the world? No! Who then *has*, for the past five years, ministered to the soldier's necessities, and by communion and kindness, as well as by funds, are cheering his loneliness and smoothing his pathway down to the tomb which he has nearly reached? Ask him! and if you are a brother, or if your tone and manner satisfies him that your inquiries are prompted by feeling, and not by curiosity; that you have the germ of Masonry in your heart, only wanting the form of initiation to make you a brother, he will answer: **THE MASONS!** a band of brothers who not only meet in tyled lodge, but who do their deeds of charity in secret, requiring no other recommendation than that the applicant is a *worthy brother*; no other stimulant for action than his sorrow and need.

Another case—Before the construction of the Pennsylvania Railroad, when the mode of conveyance from Harrisburg West was by canal boat and the Portage Railroad, across the Allegheny mountains, a boat left Pittsburg for the East, crowded with passengers, mostly well dressed, and of the class called genteel. Among them were merchants from the South and West, going to the Eastern cities to purchase goods; Eastern men returning home, well pleased with their investments in Western lands and mortgages, and one party on their wedding tour, *via* New York, Saratoga, Niagara, and the lakes, home.

In one corner of the boat, on a side bench, lay a man apparently about 25 years of age, nearly at death's door with consumption. Weak and wan, he could with difficulty sit up during meals, while it was necessary to use the bench whereon he lay as a seat at table. His deep hollow cough and continued expectoration, added to his almost dying look, were painful to listen to and have continually in view. At Johnstown he was placed in the cars, and crossed the Portage road to Hollidaysburg, where another boat was waiting, bound for

Harrisburg. On reaching Hollidaysburg, the passengers rushed out of the cars, hurried to the boat, and inquired for the Captain, addressing him somewhat as follows :

“We have come on from the West, and desire to take passage on your boat, but it must be on this condition: that you do not take in the same boat a sick man now in the cars, whose presence has been so disagreeable to us since we left Pittsburg, that we had rather not go on to-day than to travel with him. We await your decision.”

The Captain, who was a resident of Harrisburg, and from the heart outwards every inch a Mason, replied: “Gentlemen, I have heard your statement and request; I desire to hear the other side. Who speaks for the sick man?” No one answering, the Captain stepped across the wharf into the cars, and related to the sick man—who was unable to walk out—the request of the passengers, asking what he had to say. The poor invalid raised his head, tears flowing from his eyes, and, *with a sign well understood by the Captain*, replied, “that he well knew that his presence must be unpleasant to **his** fellow passengers, as he felt that he was near his end; that he was anxious to reach an Eastern city, where he had a mother and sister, there to die. He feared that unless he went on immediately, he would not reach them alive.” The Captain replied, in the hearing of the passengers, who were listening, “You shall go, if I have no other passenger!” and taking the poor brother into his arms, bore him into the boat, and carefully laid him upon a couch. Then going out on deck, he ordered his men to unloose the boat and shove off, coolly requesting all who desired to take passage, to point out their baggage and step on board. The passengers stood on the wharf, evidently surprised and ashamed. At length the wedding party walked on board, and the rest followed. The boat started, and the Captain, going into the cabin, immediately ordered some toast and tea for the sick brother. The passengers, after consultation, made an apology to the Captain and also to the sick man, to whom afterwards they were more attentive. They left the boat we trust better than they entered it, though probably ignorant of the mystic tie which linked the hearts of the Captain and the sick man together.

My remarks thus far, outside perhaps, of the special business of this address, have been, as you perceive, of MASONRY; not distinguishing Symbolic from Capitular, Blue from Red, Master Masonry from Royal Arch. The fact is, I recognize no distinction as to its *character* and *mission*. I wish there were less as to organization and form.

Royal Arch Masonry, as a separate and independent organization, is of comparatively modern date. It is believed that a large majority of the best informed Companions, as well in Europe as America, regret that it was ever so separated. The Royal Arch is in truth founded upon and but a part of the Master's Degree, as is the Mark but an appendage of the Fellow Craft. The separation grew out, and was one of the results of the memorable schism in England, which occurred in the forepart of the last century, about the time Masonry was introduced into America. This schism was not completely harmonized there until 1813. The remembrance of it *here* is embedded in the phraseology of our ritual, in the term "*Ancient York Mason*." The effects of it, as a precedent for over-legislation, change and innovation, may be recognized everywhere.

The earliest mention of the Royal Arch as a separate degree, is in 1740. It is there noticed as one of the results of the schism in England, and as a difference between the *work* of the two opposing bodies. The seceders from the Grand Lodge of England called themselves "*Ancients*," and stigmatized the Grand Lodge and its adherents as "*Moderns*." They organized as "The Grand Lodge of *all* England," cut off the Royal Arch from the Master's degree, invented a system of writing by characters, and assumed to themselves the honorable title of "Ancient Masons, acting under the old York Constitutions, cemented and consecrated by immemorial observance." The claim of regular descent and authority from YORK, where Masonry was first established by *charter*, and the first Grand Lodge was held in A. D. 930, added to the great activity and ability of Lawrence Dermott, their leader, gave this body great popularity, both in England and this country, although their opponents were undoubtedly the con-

stitutional and regular Grand Lodge, and patronized and sustained by the Royal Family and Nobility.

The first Lodge in Pennsylvania, of which Dr. Franklin was Master, was under the authority of the Grand Lodge of England, called *Moderns*, being No. 89 on their Registry. Lodge No. 2, and those following, were, in connection with the other body, called *Ancients*. The Franklin Lodge died out in 1786, and its number was not replaced; unless, as some contend, it was then assumed by the Grand Lodge.

The first Royal Arch Chapter ever opened in America, of which any account has been published, is that of No. 3, in this city, under their Lodge warrant; about the year 1758. This Lodge and Chapter derived their authority from, and held communion with, the "Grand Lodge of all England," called *Ancients*, in which body the Royal Arch, as a separate degree, undoubtedly had originated and been arranged *not twenty years before*. Our Royal Arch Masonry, therefore, was derived, both as to date and authority, from the fountain head. If we have preserved it as we received it, those who differ from us must have innovated or changed it. As it was a *new* arrangement, it may have been in some features changed, revised and *improved*, without infringing upon the landmarks of Masonry.

The Grand Chapter of Pennsylvania is the oldest on this continent, having been formed by our Grand Lodge on the 23d of November, 1795, William Ball, then Grand Master, as Grand High Priest. A communication on the subject of the government of Grand Chapters was immediately addressed to the Grand Lodge of all England. The reply from that body, enclosing a copy of the rules and regulations for the government of Royal Arch Chapters, was received and read in our Grand Lodge May 30th, 1796.

Thomas Smith Webb, in the earlier editions of his Monitor, concedes that our Grand Chapter is the oldest, but dates its formation in September, 1797, nearly two years too late. The Grand Chapter of Pennsylvania continued under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge, whose Grand Master was *ex officio* Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter, until 1824, when the Grand Chapter was made an independent body, electing its own officers as at present.



I will here remark, that for several years past, it has been the opinion of many of our best informed and most zealous Companions, that our present Constitution, Rules and Regulations require revision and change. For this purpose, in 1858, a committee was appointed "to revise the Constitution, Rules and Regulations of the Grand Chapter," who, in 1859, made a report, evincing great labor and care in its preparation. It did not, however, meet with the approbation of the Grand Chapter, when submitted for their consideration, but was indefinitely postponed.

The character of Pennsylvania Masonry is that of rigid conservatism, and opposition to change—a dread of innovation, and a jealousy of much that is called progress and improvement, even in matters not touching the landmarks. Her maxim is, that as Masonry is unchangeable, we are to look backward towards the fountain head to learn what is Masonry in its purity. That the *errors* of the present are to be corrected by a reference to the *truth* of the past, instead of the popular opinion of the day, which seems to be in favor of abolishing and forsaking the *old*, and constructing and adopting something *new*.

There are now working within this jurisdiction forty-three Chapters, having at the last returns 2908 affiliated members. The number of the Royal Arch Masons in the state is much greater—many worthy Companions contenting themselves with membership in the Master's Lodge.

From all that I can learn, the addition of membership to our Chapters during the past year, has not been so great as might have been expected, by a comparison with the exaltations of the few years preceeding. I look upon this as a healthy symptom, indicating soundness in the body of Royal Arch Masonry in this state.

No one should be admitted to the *first degree* of Masonry who is not *affirmatively* and *positively* a moral man; companionable by nature, adapted to fraternal intercourse, and capable of deriving benefit from the teachings of Masonry. It has very truly been said that "Masons are a picked and selected body of men;" how much more true should this be said of



those who ask to be made Royal Arch Masons—to pass the Overseer's Square, to dispense light and truth, and to work at the Second Temple. As Past Masters, they have promised “to be good men and true, and strictly to obey the moral law; to guard against intemperance and excess, and to promote the general good of Society.” The strength of Masonry depends far less upon numbers, than upon the character—the steadfast integrity of its members.

We are indeed a “Universal Brotherhood,” including men of every country, sect and opinion. But, adhering to our rules and landmarks, there are *many* men, of every country, sect and opinion, whom we ought not and cannot admit into our Chapters. It is that which cometh *into* the Chapter, and not that which is without or goeth out, that defileth it.

In spite of all the care and vigilance which can be exercised, a few unworthy men will be found among us. Men upon whom the beautiful and impressive teachings of our Order have made no good impression; who have no respect for God or love to man. This, however, is no sound argument against our Institution, or its teachings. Bad men will find their way into every society; and men, even good, may fall away, bringing disgrace upon themselves and sorrow upon those connected with them. A traitor was among the Apostles of our Lord. Our Grand Master Solomon greatly erred in the later part of his life—so did Peter, the Apostle, and so do many great and gifted men in all the professions and relations of life. The very best of men fail perfectly to live up to either their privileges, or their professions and promises. *None but the bad—the servants of sin—the children of the evil one—perfectly do the work, and truly live out the maxims of their father—the Devil.*

Soon after my installation, I had printed and sent out with the commission to each District Deputy Grand High Priest a circular, calling his attention to the powers and authorities in the commission conferred, with a view to their exercise as *duties enjoined*, stating my expectation that he should visit all the Chapters within his district once or more within the year, for the performance of those duties, and to make a full and particular report of his proceedings, and the state of their

Chapters, before the meeting of the Grand Chapter in November. I regret that *all* have not reported, so that the Grand Chapter could now have before them all the information necessary to judge of the state and condition of Royal Arch Masonry in our Commonwealth. It is sufficient here to say that entire harmony prevails throughout our subordinate Chapters.

Finding that there had never been any commission or form of appointment given to Grand Chaplains, no definiten powers conferred or specific duties enjoined, nothing to bring them into immediate connection with the Grand Chapter or officers thereof, I drafted and had printed in a neat and appropriate style, a "Commission for Grand Chaplains," granting and giving to them all the powers, authorities and privileges thereof, confidently trusting that they would perform the duties and exercise the privileges appertaining to that holy office. "To visit as often as may be convenient the R. A. Chapters in your neighborhood; to offer therein to the SUPREME ARCHITECT of the Universe, the ETERNAL JEHOVAH, oblations of prayer and praise—invoking His blessing upon the Chapter and its labors, the fraternity at large, and the whole brotherhood of mankind; also, to dispense light and truth to the uninformed; administer brotherly admonition and reproof to the wayward and erring; recommend union, harmony and fraternal affection among all; and especially, by precept and example, to encourage a strict adherence to the true and acknowledged principles of Ancient Masonry, as held and practised by this Grand Chapter."

I have reason to believe that good has already resulted from this. Our reverend Companions, in the country at least, feeling themselves to be officers of the Grand Chapter, have not only been more punctual in their visits to the Chapters near them, but have, in several instances, administered brotherly admonition and reproof with good and wholesome effect. This I conceive to be the true positions of Chaplains in Masonry. There should be no drones in the Masonic hive—all should be workers.

Some two years since, under a resolution of this Grand Chapter, a special committee *on work* was appointed, consist-

ing of our Past Grand High Priests, whose Masonic experience reached back and connected with those who were the fathers of Royal Arch Masonry in America. Their report was made, and, after deliberation, was in the main adopted by the Grand Chapter, as the authorized work of the Chapters within this jurisdiction. It has not yet, however, so far as I can learn, been generally adopted by the Subordinate Chapters—probably more from want of instruction than any opposition to it.

Without endorsing or dissenting from it, either as a whole or in part, I will here remark, that in a *few* particulars, (by *some* considered essential,) it differs from the work practised in many, if not all the other States of our Union. This, however, is not singular, as it is well known to all Masons who visit Lodges and Chapters in the different States, that what is called the “*Work of Masonry*”—the ceremony, the form, as well as the phraseology, in which the esoteric instructions in the various degrees of Masonry, from the Entered Apprentice to the Royal Arch are given, are somewhat different in Pennsylvania from that of any other State in our Union; and also in a slighter degree, variant from that *now* practiced in England, from whence we received our Masonry. This difference, not in the *Masonry taught*, but in the *mode* of teaching, is admitted. But the charge based upon this admission, that *our* work is *wrong*, and *theirs* *right*; *ours* *new* and *theirs* *old*, is *not* admitted. On the contrary, *we* claim that *ours* is the *old and ancient work*, and that the *other* is the *new*.

As the subject of “*work*,” or the ritual and lectures in the various degrees of Masonry, and the differences therein, are now being inquired into everywhere, and as many are becoming tired of innovation and change, and disposed to obey the injunction of the prophet, “Stand ye in the way and see, and ask for the *old* paths, where is the *good* way, and walk *therein*, and ye shall find rest for your souls,” it may not be irrelevant here briefly to refer to our Masonic history, and state the reasons *why* we hold our system of work to be *plumb, level and square*, the *old and ancient work*, which our fathers received and handed down to us.

I have already stated that our Masonry was received from

England about the middle of the last century. It is not certain that any Grand Lodge was organized in Pennsylvania till after 1764, when William Ball, Esq., was commissioned from England as Provincial Grand Master. This position he continued to occupy so long as Pennsylvania was a colony of Great Britain, until he was *elected* Grand Master in 1779, by the Grand Lodge convened. He lived a zealous and well informed Mason until 1810. His successors in the office of Grand Master and *ex officio* Grand High Priests of our Grand Chapter, include some of the best and most eminent men ever produced in our Commonwealth—statesmen, divines, lawyers, physicians, and men of business—learned and accomplished Masons. They need no eulogy or praise from me. Only one name will be here mentioned, and his, merely to connect the past with the present. Bayse Newcomb was made a Mason in this city in 1807, three years before the death of William Ball. After serving in various offices and positions in both Lodge and Chapter, he was elected Grand Master, and of course became Grand High Priest in 1817. He lived in the active exercise of his faculties until 1856—a repository of Masonic knowledge, especially with regard to the work, equal to any man of his generation. You who knew him well, and often consulted him, know that what he had seen and learned in the Lodge and Chapter he did not forget. He had learned his Masonry from those who had received it from England and planted it here; and many of those who now hear me, especially our Committee on Work, have received instructions from him in regard to the matters in which we are said to differ from others.

Before 1720, we have no information of any arranged or regular system of lectures in Masonry. Each Master taught in his own way, amplifying or adorning according to his ability or taste. About that time, Anderson, who collected the ancient charges, in connection with Desaguliers, then Deputy Grand Master, arranged a system of lectures. In 1732 the Grand Lodge of England commissioned one Martin Clare “to prepare a system of lectures which should be adapted to the existing state of the Order, without infringing on the ancient



landmarks." "This version of lectures," says Dr. Oliver, "was so judiciously drawn up and arranged, that its practice was enjoined upon all the Lodges; all other lectures being abrogated and pronounced obsolete." Some ten years after this, Dr. Manningham added forms of prayer, the general practice having been to use a selection from the prayer book of the church, which always lay upon the Master's table.

Soon after this, Lodges No. 2, 3 and 4 were instituted in this city, under authority of the *Ancient* Grand Lodge of England. They of course received the work and lectures from England, being those of Clare and Manningham; arranged, of course, by Dermott, to suit the change made by the separation of the Royal Arch. Dermott's *first* edition of *Ahiman Rezon*, is published in 1756.

Some ten years after this, before 1770, Thomas Dunkerly, a very learned man, was authorized by the Grand Lodge of England, called *Modern*, to re-model and prepare a new code of lectures. Dunkerly was a liberal and popular man, frequently visited the *Ancient* Lodges, was intimate with Dermott, gathered from him his new arrangement of the Royal Arch, and introduced it into his system of lectures, which "was adopted by the Grand Lodge without amendment, and its practice enjoined upon all the Lodges under its jurisdiction."

The system of work and lectures, of both Dermott and Dunkerly, was introduced into this country by persons coming over, and especially by the Army Lodges in the British service, both before and during the Revolutionary war. We have historic evidence that there was intercommunion between some of these Army Lodges and No. 3, of this city, in relation to the Royal Arch. The work and lectures so received, with perhaps slight variations calculated to simplify and reduce in length without losing in substance, we believe to be the work in Pennsylvania *now*, so far, at least, as the work is done in conformity with the regulations of the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter. The spirit of Pennsylvania Masonry has at all times been highly conservative and opposed to change. No change is known ever to have been made. No teacher or lecturer on



the work of Masonry, except appointed and instructed by our Grand Lodge, has ever been encouraged or tolerated in Pennsylvania. No monitor or manual, or system of lectures, has ever been adopted or recommended by either Grand body, except the Pennsylvania Ahiman Rezon; the first edition of which was published in 1783, and which, in addition to historical matter, the ancient charges and Constitution of the Grand Lodge, merely contains the public ceremonial, prayers, charges, &c.

Whence, then, it may be asked, arises the difference in work? We answer *first* in the idea extensively held, that as the ritual and lectures are not landmarks, it is competent for every Grand Lodge or Grand Chapter to alter, change and revise them at pleasure. *Second*, in the rage for lecture making, which was the offspring of the unhappy schism in England—the effects of which extended to this country.

The system of lectures to which we have last alluded had scarcely become general in England before Hutchinson, author of a work entitled “*Spirit of Masonry*,” started a system of lectures of his own in the North of England. Near the same time, Preston, author of “*Illustrations of Masonry*,” taught his system in the South of England. These two learned and accomplished Masons, soon afterwards united their views and formed an entire system of lectures, more full and beautiful than any in use before. This system prevailed in England till the union of the two Grand Lodges and the healing of the schism in 1813. One of the first acts of this United Grand Lodge was to authorize the Rev. Dr. Hemming, their Senior Grand Warden, to revise the lectures. His report was adopted, and is now the *established* system of teaching Masonry in England, although many Lodges, it is said, prefer and still practice the Hutchinson and Preston system. This certainly accounts for any difference in the work between us and the English Lodges of this day, as they have countenanced, if not adopted and authorized three changes of lectures since we received our Masonry from them.

In regard to our own country, it is well known that the Hutchinson and Preston system was introduced, and that one

or more lecturers travelled in some of the Eastern States teaching it. But the great difference in work between Pennsylvania and her sister States has been the result of the work and labor of THOMAS SMITH WEBB, the American lecture maker. The system of Webb was gathered from all others before him, though mostly from Preston, from whom he is said to have received instructions while on a visit to England. He acknowledges his obligations to Preston in the first edition of his Monitor, published in 1797. This system, either as first arranged, or as afterwards changed by Webb himself, or the other monitor, manual, or chart makers, who have copied Webb's work, adding plates, designs, &c., or as enlarged and varied by the *lecturers* sent out to teach it, is and has for half a century been the work in nearly all the Masonic Lodges in America outside of Pennsylvania. It has also, in some of its features, crept into many of the Lodges and Chapters in the Northern and Western parts of our State. We will not here express our opinion as to the *right* or *wrong* in this question as to difference of work; nor, as to which is the *best* or *most beautiful* system. But we do here express our decided opinion, that beyond all reasonable doubt, *our* work, in its main features, is the *old and ancient work* as practised one hundred years ago, and that the *other work*, differing from ours, has been derived from some of the *later* systems we have mentioned.

Companions—In the building of the first temple at Jerusalem—a symbol of our Order—"there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building." No sounds discordant, nothing to prevent or jar upon the harmony of the Craft, was allowed upon that holy mount. Even so do the rules of Masonry prohibit the introduction of *party* politics or *sectarian* religious questions within our halls, as calculated to engender strife and stir up bitter feelings; to arouse ambition and other emotions interfering with the sweet harmony and concord that should ever reign therein.

But Masonry is not only *Piety*, but PATRIOTISM. Its teachings, its spirit, and its influence tend to the highest welfare of

the State or country in which Masons reside. A bad citizen can never be a good Mason. He who is not faithful to his country will be treacherous to his brethren. He who violates the laws of the land will not be particular as to his adherence to the landmarks or rules of our Order, which, among other things, enjoin upon us "to be peaceable citizens, and cheerfully to conform to the laws of the country in which we reside—not to be concerned in plots and conspiracies against government, but patiently to submit to the decisions of the Supreme Legislature." We are members of a great Brotherhood. Whatever, therefore, comes home to us, or befalls our country, having a direct connection with the peace and safety of ourselves and families, or the welfare and happiness of our brethren, commands our attention and interest as Masons and citizens. Looking out, then, from our Grand Chapter, upon our country at present, what answer can be given to the question, "Watchman, what of the night?"

An alarm, like a fire-bell at night, is sounding throughout our land, so loudly as to reach our sacred and peaceful halls. It proclaims in tones not to be disregarded, that our country is in danger. That this Union, the work of our fathers, cemented at the first with their blood, and consecrated by a thousand hallowed associations, is about to be rent asunder; its fragments, the scorn and contempt of nations, who have hitherto regarded it—"the wonder of the world—an example to be copied." That States which have heretofore revolved in harmony around a common centre, are about to leave their orbit, and either stand out alone in space, or so rush against each other, as to make foes of those who have been pledged as brothers. This threatened peril is not to be disregarded. It justifies, if not *calls* for an appeal from this place, to the patriotism and fraternal feeling of our Order; of all who cherish the memory of our fathers, and who love our race.

American Masonry was born of pure and noble parentage, and rocked in the cradle of our country's revolutionary struggle. Its walls, like those of the holy city in the days of Zerubabel, have been reared in troublous times. She has met with persecution, calumny and reproach; stood against the storm

and the tempest, and outlived the sirocco, which, a few years since, swept its poisoned breath over our land, leaving friendships ruined and morals corrupted in its trail. The roll of her membership contains the names of many of the greatest men and purest patriots that this or any other country has ever produced. A large number of the signers of our Declaration of Independence, the officers of our Revolutionary army, and the framers of our inimitable NATIONAL CONSTITUTION, were brethren of Washington, Franklin, Warren and Lafayette, men pledged at the altars of Masonry, and trained in the Lodge to lessons of self-denial, justice, fortitude, prudence, piety and patriotism.

That Constitution—emphatically the work of our fathers—hitherto regarded as a bond of sufficient strength to hold together as one people all who acceded to it, and a canopy of sufficient length and breadth to cover the whole of this continent, is now to be tested. It is the supreme law of the land; and the enactments of Congress, under and in conformity with it, are the decisions of our Supreme Legislature, which every Mason, North or South, is bound by his solemn promise to support and sustain. In view of this, what is the position, the influence and mission of our Order at this time?

The Arch of our Masonic Union, like a bow of promise, now spans this continent. The greater and the lesser lights of Heaven, in their course, daily gild the turrets of our American Masonic Temple, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Under its ample canopy are not less than 5000 Lodges and Chapters and over 300,000 Masons—all *men* of greater or less influence, and all having received the same conservative and patriotic teaching. In our Masonic Union and Brotherhood, there are no sectional parties or divisions to heal; no balance of power between North and South to maintain; no Mason's and Dixon's line to divide. All are members of the same fold; all brothers of Washington, Franklin, Jackson and Clay—citizens of our common country. If true Masons—they are the most powerful conservative element now in this nation—whether residing in Pennsylvania or South Carolina, they *must* regard each other as BRETHREN, and *not for one moment* do or countenance *any act* that

looks to arraying brother against brother. Let us, then, arouse to our duty ;

“Hands round as faithful brothers, form a bright fraternal chain ;”

Call to mind and practice our Masonic teachings in relation to our country and each other ; exert the influence we possess as citizens, as truly and effectually as did our fathers in the “ days that tried men’s souls ;” speaking with a voice that shall be heard, the sentiments of Washington and Jackson. “ This Union must not—shall not be severed !” unless by consent and agreement.

Let the glowing sentiment of a Southern brother be echoed and re-echoed from North to South, throughout our land :

“ Say, can the South sell out her share in Bunker’s hoary height ?  
Or can the North give up her boast in Yorktown’s closing fight ?  
Can ye divide with equal hand a heritage of graves ?  
Or rend in twain the starry flag that o’er them proudly waves ?

“ Can ye cast lots for Vernon’s soil, or chaffer ’mid the gloom  
That hangs its solemn folds about your common father’s tomb ?  
Or could ye meet around his grave as fratricidal foes,  
And wake your burning curses o’er his pure and calm repose

“ Ye dare not ! is the Alleghenian thunder-toned decree !  
’Tis echoed where Nevada guards the blue and tranquil sea ;  
Where tropic waves delighted clasp our flowery Southern shore,  
And where, through foaming mountain gates, Nebraska’s waters roar.”

Our nation’s capitol bears the honored name of our brother, WASHINGTON. In that city there is in the course of erection a monument to his memory, towards which Masons have largely contributed. At the laying of its corner stone there was exhibited the Masonic sash and apron which Washington was accustomed to wear, and the oriental chair which he occupied while Master of his Lodge. There, too, was the GAVEL—the emblem of authority always obeyed—which Washington himself used in laying the corner stone of the national capitol. That monument, although not completed, has risen over one hundred feet in solemn and majestic grandeur toward heaven. Its top will catch and reflect the *latest* as well as the early rays



of the sun, as it enlightens the last day of that National Union which Washington assisted in forming; to which his soul was devoted; and in defence of which he was ever ready to lay down his life.

Should the North hesitate or refuse to do justice to the South, or the South refuse to be satisfied with a faithful performance of her constitutional obligations by the North? Should any section of the Union refuse to be reconciled, bury their real or fancied wrongs, and clasp hands as brethren? Should the present excitement continue, the spirit of faction and fanaticism rage, and the demon of disunion become rampant, let every Mason in the land, on the next birthday of Washington, look towards this monument, expecting to see HIS SHADE, in full Masonic regalia, seated thereon, in that ancient oriental chair; and with the same old gavel, calling up the Craft from one end of the land to the other, and summoning the whole nation to listen to his farewell address.

The importance of several of the subjects I have commented upon will, I trust, excuse the length of this address. It only now remains for me, before installing my successor, and bidding you farewell, to thank you for the uniform kindness and favor I have ever received at your hands. During the three years I have been with you as Grand Officer, my duties have been light and my associations pleasant—a fitting close to an *official* Masonic service of twenty years.

May this Grand Chapter continue to flourish *beautiful* as the TEMPLE, *peaceful* as the ARK, and sacred as its *most holy place*. May your oblations of *piety* and *praise* be grateful as the INCENSE, your love be *warm* as its *flame*, and your CHARITY diffusive as its *fragrance*. May the approbation of Heaven be our encouragement, and the testimony of a good conscience our support, while *travelling the rugged path* of life; and may we all, through the finished work and effectual intercession of our Supreme Grand High Priest and Redeemer, finally be admitted within the last *veil*, into “that building of God, that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.”

BENJAMIN PARKE.